



Congressman Henry A. Waxman's Washington Reporter

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Warning on Aspirin for Children and Teenagers

Reye's Syndrome is a potentially serious disease which can cause brain damage, seizures, and irregular heart-beat. Twenty to thirty percent (20-30%) of the victims die. The disease usually appears just as children are recovering from the chicken pox, influenza or other viral illnesses.

Doctors have long known that children with influenza or chicken pox have an increased risk of Reye's Syndrome if they take aspirin. It was generally believed that this risk extended to about age 12, but we now know that young people up to age 21 are also at risk.

(Continued on page 2)

Waxman Meets With Soviet Diplomats



Soviet diplomat Vladimir Scherbitsky and Rep. Henry A. Waxman at a recent high-level interparliamentary conference in Washington. Waxman presented the views of the United States on Human Rights violations in the Soviet Union. The conference was the largest and highest level meeting of its kind since 1973.

Union Carbide Scandal Far From Over

The Union Carbide disaster that killed over 2,500 people in Bhopal, India, was just the beginning of a worldwide scandal in the chemical industry. Immediately after the Bhopal tragedy, we learned that Union Carbide has a nearly identical "sister plant" in the tiny town of Institute, West Virginia. I rushed to convene an emergency hearing at Institute to determine whether the Bhopal tragedy could be repeated in West Virginia.

Union Carbide Urged to Participate in Hearing

Union Carbide President Warren Anderson and his associates were invited to testify. Anderson came with an army of lawyers, scientists, and public relations experts. The Union Carbide team told the subcommittee and the press that the West Virginia plant was safe, even though it was identical to the Bhopal plant in design and operation.

At my request Union Carbide provided us with thousands of pages of documents on the Institute plant. Most of the data was indecipherable technical tabulations. I do not think Union Carbide ever expected us to analyze every document they submitted.

News of Potential Catastrophe

After returning to Washington the subcommittee staff worked virtually around the clock analyzing the Union Carbide documents and testimony.

Late one day, a senior staffer, Jerry Dodson, handed me an internal Union Carbide memo officially stamped and dated September 11, 1984 and stamped "received" by the plant manager, H.J. Karawan.

Shocking Danger Disclosed

The Union Carbide report flatly declared that there is "a real potential for a serious accident" at the Institute plant. The report warned of a danger of a "runaway reac-

(Continued on page 2)

Block and Waxman View Improved Communications System for Police and Paramedics

Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block and Rep. Waxman watch County operators working on a tiny part of a vast county-wide emergency communications system.



Rep. Waxman authored emergency legislation to cope with a situation of confusion and lack of clear channels for emergency calls. He also won changes in Federal Communications Commission rules to remedy problems encountered by police, sheriffs, paramedics, and fire fighters. As a result of swift Congressional action, Los Angeles County will be able to maintain one of the nation's most sophisticated and effective emergency communications systems. Local agencies now have reliable access to clear radio channels. According to Sheriff Block, residents of Los Angeles no longer need to fear that precious minutes will be lost in emergencies as a result of archaic equipment or lack of clear and open emergency band radio frequencies.

Reye's Syndrome (continued from page 1)

Is the Government Protecting Children and Teenagers?

Rep. Henry A. Waxman has accused the Department of Health and Human Services of doing "too little too slowly" to protect the public. The Congressman was especially critical of what he called "government and industry proposals for vague and deceptive labels." He also faulted the government for allowing the entire flu season to pass without warning labels and for counting on 'voluntary cooperation' from the drug industry.

Waxman has authored the "Emergency Reye's Syndrome Prevention Act." Under this legislation, aspirin manufacturers—including those who make aspirin in doses, flavors, and packages intended for children—will

Union Carbide (continued from page 1)

tion" causing severe leakage of methyl isocyanate (MIC). Specific suggestions were made to eliminate the danger.

If the suggestions had been forwarded to Bhopal, thousands of deaths and untold suffering might have been averted.

It was precisely a "runaway reaction" causing a massive leakage of MIC which killed 2,500 people and seriously injured thousands of others at Bhopal, India.

Union Carbide executives were either ignorant of their own internal report or deliberately deceived the public, the press, and a congressional committee. Far worse, they endangered the lives of their employees at Institute and of the residents of the surrounding community.

EPA at Fault

Under federal law, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety Administration (OSHA)—not Union Carbide—is *ultimately* responsible for the health and safety of both the workers and residents of Institute, West Virginia. Yet EPA did nothing but issue incomplete reports about the storage and processing of the deadly gas, MIC.

Will It Take a Disaster to Shake EPA?

For fifteen years—under Democratic and Republican administrations alike—the Environmental Protection Agency has betrayed the American people. It has befriended industries it was supposed to regulate. It has been satisfied with paperwork when it should have demanded *action*. An outraged Congress and an indignant public should force EPA to do its job! More than anything, we must not let another catastrophic loss of human life occur before the shortcomings of EPA are remedied.

be required to include in all advertisements the printed warning appearing on all packages. The warning will feature a two-color, eye-catching symbol.

Safe Alternative to Aspirin Available

At a recent hearing on the Reye's Syndrome problem, medical witnesses were quick to point out that very few children need ever take aspirin. The symptoms of influenza and chicken pox may be unclear at first. Either disease may first appear as vague, generalized malaise, or the start of a common cold or virus infection. For children and teenagers, the *safest* course is to avoid aspirin entirely.

One easy alternative is to give youngsters an aspirin-free substitute acetaminophen. This drug is best known by the brand name "Tylenol." Tylenol and half a dozen other brands of the drug, including products marketed by Bayer and St. Joseph's, come in children's doses, flavored, and in liquid form.

Children, and teenagers up to age 21, should turn to aspirin only on the advice of a doctor. Though Reye's Syndrome is rare, there is absolutely no reason for any young person to contract this serious disease as a result of the inappropriate use of aspirin.

Chemical Emissions Threaten Our Lives Daily

The tragedy at Bhopal made news around the world. Yet there is another tragedy occurring every day of which most of its victims are unaware.

All over the United States, chemical manufacturers poison the air with toxic emissions. Those living near the plants often experience nausea, burning eyes and throats, and persistent coughs. Far more important are medical findings that in communities such as Institute deaths from leukemia and other forms of cancer soar as high as 25 to 50% above the national average.

Internal Union Carbide documents indicate that poisonous gases are *regularly* leaked into the air. EPA documents show that these leaks are noted, but that often simple steps to correct them are seldom taken.

After the Bhopal disaster and the disclosure of gross violations of safety standards at Institute, I wrote to all the major chemical manufacturers in the United States. These companies maintain almost 5,000 chemical plants all over the country. I requested detailed information on the chemicals they make and store, the quantities of deadly gases routinely released into the air, and an evaluation of the potential for calamities. The subcommittee is prepared to use the Congressional power of subpoena to obtain this information if voluntary compliance is not swift and adequate.

During 1985, I intend to introduce legislation which will protect Americans from both the daily leaks of poison gases and the constant threat of major disasters.

Waxman Reveals Union Carbide Memo to Media



On January 24, 1985 Rep. Henry A. Waxman provided members of the news media with complete copies of an internal Union Carbide memo warning of a possibility of a catastrophic chemical explosion at their Institute, West Virginia plant.

An Update on AIDS Epidemic

Last month Rep. Henry A. Waxman convened an emergency session of the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment to focus on the growing epidemic of the incurable disease AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

The subcommittee received a detailed report on AIDS from the non-partisan Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. The subcommittee had earlier requested the OTA to review all scientific and medical information on AIDS available to date.

The voluminous OTA report and summary were generally discouraging. The report counts approximately 8,500 AIDS cases to date; a total of 40,000 cases are expected to appear in the next 18 months. No victims are expected to survive. Efforts to discover a treatment or cure have so far been fruitless. Hopes for an early breakthrough in work on a vaccine are not as high as they once were.

On reviewing the OTA report, Rep. Waxman expressed anger and despair at what he termed "the slow and often indifferent" response by the Department of Health and Human Services.

"This committee, the medical community, and representatives of groups most frequently hit by AIDS have been pleading for more than two years for a fully funded, well-coordinated program to guarantee maximum progress in AIDS research and we have sought appropriate humanitarian provisions for patients with this incurable sickness. Despite the growing number of cases, the Administration has not come to Congress for needed funds. Neither has it made a concerted effort to confront the AIDS crisis within the framework of existing programs and appropriations," said Waxman.

AIDS Blood Test Faulty

A blood test to determine whether an individual has been exposed to AIDS is now available. However, the test raises as many problems as it solves.

The test cannot tell whether a person has or will get AIDS. In most cases, it will indicate whether a person has been exposed to AIDS. Even for this purpose the test is far from 100% accurate. Some people will be told they have been exposed even when they have not. Others will be told they have not been exposed when in fact they have.

The vast majority of people exposed to AIDS will *never* contract the disease. Current research indicates that neither AIDS patients nor people who have been exposed to AIDS can transmit the disease through casual contact.

Because of the unreliability of the AIDS test, gay men, intravenous drug users, Haitians, and other persons in high risk groups should not donate blood regardless of test results.

Waxman said, "There is a very real danger that employers, insurance companies, and others with access to health

(Continued on page 4)

Charities Worried by U.S. Tax Plan

Fear Proposal Will Trigger \$35-Mil

Unmitigated Disaster Seen

Charities Say Tax Reform Plan
Would Sharply Cut Donations

By DAVID KUPFERSCHMID, Times Staff Writer

'85 Might Yield Billions Less
Tax Plan Foreseen Hurting Charities

Tax Bill Threatens Charities: Hospitals, Colleges, and Religious Groups Alarmed

Philanthropic institutions across America have joined in an effort to prevent proposals on charitable deductions from being enacted into law. The groups—including such national charities as the Red Cross, United Way, and the American Cancer Society—have been encouraged by a movement in Congress lead by Rep. Henry A. Waxman opposing any tax law changes which would reduce charitable contributions.

Experts estimate that the changes proposed by the Department of the Treasury would result in the staggering loss to charities of approximately *10 billion dollars!*

A House Resolution (H. Res. 91) authored by Waxman expresses unqualified opposition to the three-key provisions of the Treasury Department's official proposal for tax reform.

The Resolution opposes the elimination of the above-the-line fixed charitable deduction for those taxpayers who do not itemize their return. Under the Treasury Department proposal, nearly two-thirds of all taxpayers who use the short form would have *no* tax incentive to make charitable contributions.

The Resolution also opposes any change in the most popular tax deduction for charitable contributions. Currently, taxpayers who itemize their returns may deduct *all their charitable contributions*. The Treasury Department seeks to allow deductions only for contributions above 2% of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income. Most

taxpayers who itemize would no longer be able to deduct any charitable contributions.

Perhaps the greatest danger to America's charities is the proposal by the Treasury Department to deprive contributors of real estate, stocks, or merchandise from deducting the fair market value of their contributions. The Waxman Resolution opposes elimination of a clause in the tax laws which results in hundreds of millions of dollars in charitable contributions each year.

Cutbacks by the Reagan Administration have enormously increased the burdens on our voluntary, non-profit charities. The President has often expressed his belief that these private groups play a vital role in our national life. Surely, it makes no sense to diminish the ability of charities to raise money, while dependence on these indispensable groups increases.

Safety Law to Cover Disneyland, Magic Mountain, and Knotts Berry Farm

Last year twelve deaths and numerous injuries occurred at amusement parks around the country. To increase safety at these recreational sites, Rep. Henry A. Waxman has introduced legislation to bring all amusement parks under the authority of the Consumer Product Safety Commission—unless the Commission finds state inspection programs to be adequate.

"According to government statistics about 10,000 injuries occurred on amusement park rides and in haunted houses. The federal government now has authority over rides in carnivals that move from place to place, but not over stationary theme parks. This distinction does not enhance consumer confidence or trust in the safety of the amusement park rides. My bill would guarantee greater protection to the guests of such popular local theme parks as Disneyland, Magic Mountain, and Knotts Berry Farm," Waxman said.

AIDS (continued from page 3)

information might use AIDS test data to discriminate against healthy individuals who have merely been exposed to the disease." He also called for safeguards to prevent the test from being used to identify and discriminate against gays.

Subcommittee members were sobered by Waxman's observation that within four years as many Americans will have died from AIDS as were killed in Vietnam.